

HOUSE BILL 557

By Fitzhugh

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;  
Title 5; Title 8 and Title 50, relative to the paid  
leave analysis grant initiative.

WHEREAS, the Family and Medical Leave Act (29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq.), guarantees unpaid, job-protected leave for men and women to care for their newborn or newly adopted children, seriously ill family members, or their own health needs; and

WHEREAS, few states implemented their own paid leave programs to ensure workers have the economic security to meet the needs of their families; and

WHEREAS, many workers are unable to take unpaid time off because they cannot afford to do so; and

WHEREAS, paid leave programs have been shown to improve health outcomes for children, ill adults, and seniors; reduce turnover and increase employee retention, which cuts down on training costs for businesses; keep workers attached to the labor force; and boost earnings over time; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 50, Chapter 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of labor and workforce development;

(2) "Department" means the department of labor and workforce development; and

(3) "Employee" means any individual employed by any employer within this state.

(b)

(1) The commissioner of labor and workforce development shall study the feasibility of the development or implementation of a paid family and medical leave program at the state level.

(2) The study shall be restricted to Family and Medical Leave Act (29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq.) programs that are financed only through employee contributions.

(c) In order to obtain the one-time grant to fund the study, subject to the availability of funds, the commissioner shall apply for the grant through the federal department of labor's women's bureau.

(d) Upon receipt of the one-time grant money pursuant to subsection (c), the department may use the funds to develop or implement a state paid leave program that will research and examine the:

(1) Statistical analysis such as feasibility, cost benefit, and actuarial studies;

(2) Economic impact analysis;

(3) Financing, eligibility, and benefit modeling; and

(4) Education, outreach, and marketing analysis for implementation purposes.

(e) Upon the completion of the study, by March 1, 2017, the department shall provide a report on the feasibility of the development or implementation of a paid family and medical leave program to the governor, speaker of the senate, speaker of the house of representatives, commerce and labor committee of the senate, and consumer and human resources committee of the house of representatives.

SECTION 2. The commissioner of labor and workforce development is authorized to promulgate rules to effectuate the purposes of this act. The rules shall be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.